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SUBJECT: ZIM NOTES 11-02-2009

11. SUMMARY

Topics of the week:

- SADC Troika Visits Zimbabwe...
- NGO Arrests and Abductions Return to Zimbabwe...
- UN Envoy Departed...
- Teachers Report Mounting Harassment, Militarization...
- MDC to Push for Reform in Parliament...
- Farm Violence Increases, Targets Black Workers...
- Judicial Reform Conference Cancelled...
- Amnesty International Wants SADC Action...
- Human Rights Watch Repeats Calls to Suspend Zim from KP...
- IMF Highlights Risks to Recovery...
- Gono's Cover Story...
- Dust Settling over Kingdom Meikles...

On the Political and Social Front

12. SADC Troika Visits Zimbabwe...The foreign ministers of Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zambia; representing the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security; and SADC Executive Secretary Tomaz Salamao arrived in Harare on October 28 to review the implementation of the Global Political Agreement and to address the political impasse between ZANU-PF and MDC-T. SADC chairman, DRC President Joseph Kabila, is expected to join them. MDC-T is skeptical this visit will accomplish much and wants SADC involvement bumped up to Troika heads of state and possibly an extraordinary summit of all SADC heads of state.

13. NGO Arrests and Abductions Return to Zimbabwe... A number of events in the last week are raising concerns that ZANU-PF is ramping up efforts to intimidate civil society and the MDC through its usual techniques of politically-motivated arrests, abductions, and

intimidation. For instance, Bindura council employees loyal to ZANU-PF burned 10,000 copies of the MDC's newsletter The Changing Times. One MDC employee was abducted and another was nearly abducted on October 27. Earlier in the week, police in Victoria Falls arrested the two leaders of the National Association of NGOs (NANGO) and charged the activists for organizing a political meeting without police clearance in violation of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). The court granted them bail and released them on October 27. Two members of another NGO, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) were also arrested under POSA on October 28. See Harare 867

¶4. UN Envoy Deported... UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, Manfred Nowak, himself became the victim of degrading treatment when Zimbabwean security officers refused to grant him entry on October 28. Nowak was already in South Africa when he learned on October 27 that the government had rescinded its invitation for his fact-finding mission scheduled to begin on October 28. Prime Minister Tsvangirai then invited him for a meeting on October 29. When Nowak arrived in Harare, security officials said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hadn't granted clearance for the meeting and refused him entry. Nowak spent the night at the airport before being deported on October 29. See Harare 866

¶5. Teachers Report Mounting Harassment, Militarization... The Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) told us that fears are mounting in rural areas of renewed harassment of teachers. Teachers at the Maungwa Secondary School in Gutu North report that the local militia is forcing children from age 14 and up to participate in daily military drills. In the Mberengwa area of Midlands, the

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District Education Officer in the Ministry of Education has demanded teachers "donate" 50 cents to the December ZANU-PF conference. At Chaona Primary School in Mashonaland Central, teachers fled two weeks ago fearing mounting anti-MDC rhetoric would lead to renewed violence. Four of the teachers who spent several weeks in the hospital as a result of 2008 violence in Chaona came to Harare to seek protection and transfer from the school.

¶6. MDC to Push for Reform in Parliament... Next week, the MDC-T caucus in Parliament intends on pushing forward a private member's bill which would amend the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) that has been abused by State security agents to limit public dissent. While insiders are not optimistic of the amendment's chances because of the MDC's reduced numbers in Parliament, they view it as an opportunity to highlight the need for legislative reform and force ZANU-PF and President Mugabe into rejecting it. They may make similar efforts to amend other abused pieces of legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Information Act (AIPPA), the Broadcasting Services Act, and Section 121 of the Criminal Procedures and Evidence Act. See Harare 862

¶7. Farm Violence Increases, Targets Black Workers... During a visit to central Zimbabwe last week, we witnessed the growing crisis facing unemployed and evicted farm workers who are increasingly the victims of Zimbabwe's chaotic land reform. See Harare 856. We also met a white farmer the day before a group of drunken ZANU-PF thugs began a two-day sit-in on his property that eventually resulted in his eviction from his home of 19 years. When the farmer, one of the plaintiffs in the SADC Tribunal Campbell case, confronted Defense Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa to seek a reprieve, Mnangagwa told him that he had brought the invasion on himself because he had taken the government to court to keep his property. See Harare 857

¶8. Judicial Reform Conference Cancelled... An all-stakeholders conference to discuss reform of the Zimbabwean justice system was cancelled after civil society organizations pulled out, citing repression of their members, particularly the arrests of NANGO officials. The conference was organized by the ZANU-PF-led Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and was to be attended by government departments, civil society organizations, and donors. Civil Society organizations vowed not to participate in the process as long as government continued to crack down on their members.

¶9. Amnesty International Wants SADC Action... This week Amnesty International issued a statement lamenting recent arrests, abductions, and harassment in Zimbabwe and called on SADC to "recognize this recent deterioration in the human rights situation and tackle it immediately - before it degenerates further."

¶10. Human Rights Watch Repeats Calls to Suspend Zim from KP... In anticipation of the Kimberley Process plenary session next week in Namibia, Human Rights Watch has called for Zimbabwe's full suspension from the international body responsible for monitoring rough diamond trade.

On the Economic and Business Front

¶11. IMF Highlights Risks to Recovery... IMF officials briefed diplomats in Harare on October 27 at the end of a two-week visit. While the economy is set to record real growth for the first time in over a decade, they said important risks threaten Zimbabwe's economic recovery. With a widening trade deficit and faltering capital inflows, instability in the balance of payments could undermine growth. The IMF remains concerned about weak governance at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, which has imprudently tapped into the banks' reserve deposits in order to meet some of its own

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obligations. See Harare 863

¶12. Gono's Cover Story... In The Herald, ZANU-PF's idea of a daily newspaper, RBZ Governor Gideon Gono explained on October 30 that he was forced to make irregular use of banks' reserve funds because the Ministry of Finance provided no financial support. Gono reportedly claimed that he needed the money to keep Zimbabwe's electronic payments system running. While clearly absurd, Gono's cover story is par for the course and might even be good enough to let him keep his job. See Harare 865

¶13. Dust Settling over Kingdom Meikles... An end is in sight to the months-long public controversy in which Kingdom Meikles Africa Limited (KMAL), once a blue-chip local conglomerate, saw its executives accused of corruption and its share price collapse. The press has reported that rival KMAL executives have reached an agreement that will split up the company and possibly lead to the GOZ dropping criminal charges. This is good news for KMAL's shareholders, but the GOZ's heavy-handed intervention has already done permanent damage to Zimbabwe's investment climate.

Quote of the Week

¶14. "What we are seeing now was exactly how the violence began in the campaign for the presidential run-off elections between March and June last year. We are beginning to see the formation of another storm of violence." MDC-T Spokesman Nelson Chamisa on surging tensions in Zimbabwe

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